

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today, because I feel like I have a case of Déjà Vu.

Two years ago I stood on this floor, on the 8th anniversary of our invasion of Afghanistan and asked: Have our eight years, 791 American deaths and billions of U.S. dollars spent in Afghanistan made America safer?

Today, I stand in the same place, asking the same question. Now, *ten* years have passed, 1,800 American lives have been lost, and we have spent almost half a trillion dollars. And I have to ask again: Have

ten

years in Afghanistan made America safer? Sadly, just as I concluded two years ago, I must conclude again today: They have not.

We went into Afghanistan under the mantle of protecting America's national security. The perpetrators of September 11 – Al Qaeda – were in Afghanistan and we had to go after them. But just as was the case two years ago, Al Qaeda is no longer primarily in Afghanistan.

In fact, only 50 to 100 Al Qaeda operatives are estimated to be operating in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda's primary hub is still located across the border in tribal areas of Pakistan. And other Al Qaeda cells are operating around the world in Yemen, Northern Africa, and through affiliated groups in Southeast Asia and Uzbekistan. Threats to America are not from Afghanistan, but from ungoverned spaces around the world, even right here on American soil.

A review of recently foiled terrorist plots shores up the widespread origins of U.S.-centered terror attempts. The Times Square bomber is a Pakistani American who received training in the Waziristan region of Pakistan. The explosives hidden in ink cartridges and destined for an American synagogue in my own district in Chicago were planted by a Saudi militant and shipped from Yemen. The Christmas Day airline bomber was a Nigerian, inspired by Anwar Al-Awlaki, who was based in Yemen. And another devotee of Al-Awlaki was Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hasan, an American citizen born in Virginia.

Not one of these terror plots originated in Afghanistan, and yet we still we maintain close to 100,000 U.S. troops on ground there. Every major recent victory the U.S. has had in the fight against terrorism has come, not on the ground in Afghanistan, but through targeted attacks, such as those that killed Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan, and the recent strike that killed Anwar Al-Awlaki in Yemen.

There have been at least 45 jihadist terrorist attacks plotted against the U.S. since 9/11, and each one of them was foiled not by our mass ground forces in Afghanistan, but through a combination of intelligence, policing and citizen engagement.

According to terrorism expert, Erik Dahl, of the Naval Postgraduate School, "When it comes to domestic attacks and securing the homeland, what works is really good, old-fashioned policing – law enforcement, tips from the public, police informants."

Not only is our military action in Afghanistan not making us safer, but research indicates it could actually be making us *less* safe. As counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen points out, "rather than reducing the number of terrorists, the U.S. presence in Afghanistan could actually be spurring new terrorism as locals band together to resist foreign occupation." It's called accidental guerilla syndrome.

Further, a report issued last year by the gentleman from Massachusetts, Representative Tierney, revealed the U.S. military is funding the multi-billion dollar protection racket. A good portion of a \$2.16 billion transportation contract is being paid to corrupt public officials, warlords and the Taliban to get needed supplies to our troops. We are funding the very insurgency we are fighting.

We went into Afghanistan to make America safer. But for several years now, we have known that our enemies are no longer concentrated in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda is an enemy without borders and so now we must have a strategy without borders.

The question now is: Will we adjust our strategy to reflect today's circumstances? Or will we continue to live in the past, repeating this destructive cycle of sending dollars and troops to a

mission no longer central to American security?

We have to end our military presence in Afghanistan now, because I don't want to stand in this same spot a year from now with another case of Déjà vu."